

# FULBRIGHT'S MEMO NOW A 'BEST SELLER'

BY WILLARD EDWARDS

[Chicago Tribune Press Service]

Washington, Aug. 19—The "Fulbright memorandum" has become Capitol Hill's best seller. Its contents have stimulated more national interest, expressed in mail to Congress, than tensions in Berlin.

Senator J. William Fulbright [D., Ark.], chairman of the Senate foreign relations committee, who has said the document was prepared at his request, is described both as angry and anguished.

The public reaction startled many members of Congress. They have been preoccupied with answering President Kennedy's demands for a 50 billion dollar defense bill and an 11 billion dollar foreign aid measure. Debates have centered about the problems of Berlin and Cuba.

## Tide of Letters

Instead of letters on these subjects, the legislators have been getting a tide of indignant missives, denouncing the administration gag on military men who want to instruct their troops and the public about the dangers of communism.

Fulbright sent the memorandum to the White House and the Pentagon in June. It denounced American military officers who conducted courses on communist tactics, calling them "right wing radicals" who equated "socialism" with "communism" and thus were in opposition to much of the Kennedy administration's program.

The American people, it said, had no need to be alerted to the menace of the cold war. There was "considerable danger" in permitting military officers to instruct their troops and the public on the dangers of communism.

## Opposed to Aid

If the American people had their way, the memorandum noted, they would probably vote to discontinue all foreign aid. The inference was left that the instruction courses on communism had contributed to this dangerous sentiment.

"Who'd have thought there was a live issue in this thing?" marveled a senator who became aware of the Fulbright memorandum only after he began receiving heavy mail denouncing it.

Many writers asked for copies of the Congressional Record containing the text of the memorandum. The supply is almost exhausted.

Friends of Fulbright scoff that "military officers must be asking their thousands of relatives to write Congress."

Other lawmakers, after reflection, decided that the unex-

pected outpouring of mail reflected public resentment at seeming weakness and hesitancy in Washington in dealing with the aggressive moves of international communism.

## Touches Sore Spot

"Bill Fulbright touched a sore spot, an exposed nerve, when his memo stated that the people must be restrained from wanting to 'hit the Communists with everything we've got,'" commented a member of the Senate armed services committee. "That's exactly the way the people do feel, if I judge this mail correctly, and they want Washington to feel the same way."

Senator Strom Thurmond [D., S. C.], almost alone when he first began campaigning for a senatorial investigation of the conditions alleged in the memorandum, is picking up senatorial support daily. He has been snowed under by thousands of letters of encouragement.

Fulbright also is receiving many letters, critical of his stand. Initially contemptuous of Thurmond's efforts, he was later informed that he was in hot water politically in his home state where he must run for reelection next year.

Fulbright appealed for support from members of the

so-called liberal bloc. Thus far, only two, Senators Albert Gore [D., Tenn.] and Eugene J. McCarthy [D., Minn.], have responded. They showed caution, however, in questioning Thurmond's allegations in floor debate Thursday.

This debate explored all the implications of the Fulbright memorandum and Sen. Karl E. Mundt [R., S. D.] produced a fresh one. He said it tended to validate a fraud which the Communist party of the United States had been trying to perpetrate upon the American public for 30 years—that communism is a political philosophy, not a conspiracy.

Mundt advanced this thesis after listening to Gore and McCarthy repeatedly assert that the memorandum did not advocate a gag upon military men; it only proposed making them shut up about "political subjects."

## Comfort to Enemy

"By letting the implication go forth that the military should not talk about communism, because to do so is political, tends to verify a communist fraud and is a most serious disservice to the country," Mundt said. "It surely serves to give aid and comfort to the enemy."

The accuracy of the memorandum's judgment of American opinion on foreign aid was

not questioned by any speaker in the debate. The danger was brought home to the administration when the House voted to demolish the President's five year 8.8 billion dollar foreign aid lending program.

The memorandum's attack on military men who didn't see much difference between socialism and communism brought forth a remark from Mundt.

## Socialism in Hurry

"Communism could be defined as socialism in a hurry," he said. "The Communist rides in the locomotive whereas the socialist rides in the caboose. But they are on the same train, going to the same place, moving toward economic and political perdition as fast as the train can move. They are on the same track."

The first effect of the Fulbright memorandum on Pentagon policy was felt July 10 when Assistant Defense Secretary Arthur Sylvester, a former Newark, N. J., newspaper man who covered the Kennedy Presidential campaign, was placed in charge of "guiding" the future public activities of military officers.

Since then, public statements of both civilian and military leaders have been censored, Thurmond said. All remarks regarded as harsh on communism, have been deleted.

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